

Futures: Vergennes Real Estate Offer Withdrawn

Citing legal advice that the property is out of compliance with Act 250 (Vermont's environmental control law), the partners who had proposed locating a sub-acute community recovery facility at the former Briarwood Manor nursing home property in Vergennes have withdrawn their real estate purchase offer. An attorney for Counseling Services of Addison County and Howard Center for Human Services gave notice in a letter to the property owners on Thursday that the purchase and sales agreement reached last October was being terminated. The letter is posted on the Mental Health Update web page under this week's Update.

Futures: Northeast Kingdom Effort Continues

As noted in last week's Update, Northeast Kingdom Human Services is pursuing its interest in locating sub-acute services at the former Lakeview Inn in Greensboro. Negotiations on a purchase price are in progress. The NKHS mental health director has been spending significant time on the Vermont State Hospital units interacting with patients who are potential residents for a sub-acute program. This process is an important client engagement strategy and is also providing invaluable guidance to the clinical program development.

Futures: Three Agencies Join To Offer Sub-acute Services

The executive directors of the Howard Center for Human Services, Clara Martin Center in Orange County, and Washington County Mental Health met on January 11 and have agreed to work together to provide sub-acute services. They are exploring sites in Chittenden County and Central Vermont for a suitable location for a community recovery facility.

Futures: Blake Responds to Stakeholder Letter

Deputy Commissioner of Health Paul Blake has responded to a January 6 letter from Ed Paquin of Vermont Protection & Advocacy and a dozen other mental health stakeholders. Both letters are posted on the Mental Health Update web page under this week's Update.

Futures: Rutland, Retreat Express Interest in New Inpatient Services

The Futures Advisory Group's November 16, 2005 recommendations, in addition to endorsing creation of a primary inpatient service, supported the development of "smaller inpatient capacities," with preference given to working with existing designated hospital inpatient providers. All psychiatric inpatient providers were again polled about their interest in developing one of these "smaller capacities." Two designated hospitals, Retreat Healthcare and Rutland Regional Medical Center responded affirmatively. Their letters are posted on the Mental Health Update web page under this week's Update.

Futures: Increased Consumer Participation Solicited

Nick Nichols of the Mental Health Division will begin to work with the Futures project team to assist in gathering more consumers input for the Futures Initiative. Nichols will work with Futures Group members to identify opportunities to bring consumers into the process, to bring information about the process to consumers, and to identify any barriers to participation that may exist. Suggestions are welcome. Nichols can be reached at nnichols@vdh.state.vt.us.

Futures: FAHC, BGS & Futures Staff Meet

Fletcher Allen leadership, Buildings & General Services (BGS) leadership and the Mental Health Futures Initiative staff members Beth Tanzman and John Howland met this week to begin discussions how to work together on developing a proposal for a primary inpatient replacement service, pursuant to the Futures Group recommendation.

The discussion briefly touched on the stakeholder planning process that led to the recommendation, the goals and milestones for the BGS contract with Architecture Plus, and the agreements and constraints regarding green space, height restrictions, and zoning parameters on the FAHC campus. Tanzman shared her intention to form a Futures facilities work group to provide a core team for Architecture Plus to work with.

Futures: New Work Group To Meet With Architecture Plus

Architecture+ (“Architecture Plus,” www.aplususa.com) of Troy, NY, is about to begin design and site selection work for the primary inpatient replacement service and for the smaller capacities recommended by the Futures Group. The first step is to meet with the stakeholder community to discuss ideas of what should be included in the facility. Frank Pitts, principal partner of Architecture Plus will meet with stakeholders on Wednesday, January 18, from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., in Conference Room 2 at the Health Department, 108 Cherry Street, Burlington.

Two questionnaires will be distributed by Architecture Plus to solicit information about the primary and smaller capacity needs. Drafts of the questionnaires are posted on the Mental Health Update web page under this week’s Update.

Draft agenda for meeting with Architecture Plus:

- Introductions
- Overview of the project (Beth Tanzman)
- Introduction of Architecture Plus (Mike Kuhn, Buildings & General Services)
- Team member roles, schedule, work process (Frank Pitts)
- Issues and innovations in planning new hospitals (Architecture Plus Team)
- Facilitated discussion on qualities and priorities of the new facility
- Distribution and discussion of questionnaire (patient characteristics, program elements, internal operations, staffing, etc.)

Futures Director Beth Tanzman is assembling a facilities work group to work with Pitts’ firm, FAHC and the Futures staff. Invited participants, in addition to the Futures group members: Judy Rosenstreich, Pat Camp, David Mitchell, Jim Walsh, Lynne Colville, Rick Palmisano (or Retreat

designee), FAHC staff, Stuart Graves, Nick Emlen, Terry Rowe (or designee), Mary Moulton, Sheryl Bellman. Suggestions for other invitees are welcome.

Futures: Burlington City Council Briefing Set for February 6.

Burlington City Council members have invited state and FAHC representatives to appear before the council on February 6 to discuss the plans to develop a proposal for additional inpatient psychiatric services at Fletcher Allen.

Futures: Upcoming Meetings

- Futures Stakeholder Meeting With Architecture Plus, Wednesday, January 18, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., Conference Room 2, Health Department, 108 Cherry Street, Burlington. Open to the public.
- Futures Advisory Group Meeting, Monday, January 23, 2 – 4:30 p.m., Skylight Conference Room, Waterbury State Office Complex. Open to the public.
- Sub-acute Rehabilitation and Secure Residential Work Group, Wednesday, February 1, 9–11 a.m., Medical Director's Office, Vermont State Hospital, Waterbury. Open to the public.

Transformation Grant Follow-up

The Health Department is hosting a follow up meeting for individuals who were involved in the development and support of Vermont's application to the 2005 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration's Mental Health Transformation State Incentive Grant program. At the final meeting of the Mental Health Transformation Grant Stakeholders Committee, a number of participants expressed a strong interest in reconvening the group after the grant had been awarded, regardless of whether or not Vermont's application was funded. There was a strong sentiment among the group that some of the ideas generated by the group to help transform Vermont's mental health system could be at least partially initiated if Vermont did not receive funding. Members of that committee, as well as any other interested parties, are invited to discuss any next steps Vermont might be able to take to implement some of the innovative plans that were developed and documented in the grant application. Copies of SAMHSA's evaluation of Vermont's application will be available at the meeting.

Because SAMHSA may be offering additional Mental Health Transformation Grants this spring (see www.samhsa.gov/grants06/fy2006opportunity.aspx), this follow - up meeting will also include a discussion of Vermont's reapplying for a grant.

The meeting will be held on Friday, January 20th from 2 - 4 p.m. in the 2nd floor conference room, Agricultural Building, 116 State Street, Montpelier. If you plan on attending, please notify Helene Linney at 652-2000 or hlinney@vdh.state.vt.us.

VDH Reports to Board of Health on Expected DOJ Agreement

Pursuant to the reporting requirements that are a condition of Vermont State Hospital's operating license, the Health Department has sent a letter to the Board of Health on the progress of the negotiations

with the Department of Justice. The letter, posted on the Mental Health update web page, reports that an agreement of approximately 16 pages is awaiting final approval by Department of Justice officials.

VSH Census

The Vermont State Hospital census was 45 as of midnight Thursday night. The average census for the past 45 days was between 47 and 48.

Questions and comments about the Mental Health Update may be directed to John Howland Jr. (howland@vdh.state.vt.us). If you are reading a print version of this Update, you may find the web version at www.healthyvermonters.info/mh/mhindex.shtml